



Socialism impossible without the women

If we do not draw women into public activity, into the militia, into political life; if we do not tear women away from the deadening atmosphere of household and kitchen; then it is impossible to secure real freedom, it is impossible even to build democracy, let alone socialism.

[Lenin, Third Letter from Afar, Zurich, March 1917](#)

The above quote from Lenin (pictured above, speaking in the open air in the revolutionary year of 1917) expresses as clearly as can be the full meaning of our series title: “**No Woman, No Revolution**”.

Yet it was not democracy in general of which Lenin wrote. In Lenin’s eyes, democracy is not an abstract value. Democracy can never be a substitute for class struggle. Democracy is an

instrument of class struggle.

The following words were written by Lenin for the second anniversary of the Great October Revolution. They are included in the attached compilation, also downloadable from the link below:

“Let the liars and hypocrites, the dull-witted and blind, the bourgeois and their supporters hoodwink the people with talk about freedom in general, about equality in general, about democracy in general.

“We say to the workers and peasants: Tear the masks from the faces of these liars, open the eyes of these blind ones. Ask them:

“Equality between what sex and what other sex?

“Between what nation and what other nation?

“Between what class and what other class?

“Freedom from what yoke, or from the yoke of what class? Freedom for what class?

“Down with the liars who are talking of freedom and equality for all, while there is an oppressed sex, while there are oppressor classes, while there is private ownership of capital, of shares, while there are the well-fed with their surplus of bread who keep the hungry in bondage. Not

freedom for all, not equality for all, but a fight against the oppressors and exploiters, the abolition of every possibility of oppression and exploitation-that is our slogan!

"Freedom and equality for the oppressed sex!

"Freedom and equality for the workers, for the toiling peasants!

"A fight against the oppressors, a fight against the capitalists, a fight against the profiteering kulaks!

"That is our fighting slogan, that is our proletarian truth, the truth of the struggle against capital, the truth which we flung in the face of the world of capital with its honeyed, hypocritical, pompous phrases about freedom and equality in general, about freedom and equality for all."

Lenin, Soviet Power and the Status of Women, November 1919

In the document linked below you will also find that in September of the same year of 1919 there was already a "Fourth Moscow City Conference Of Non-Party Working Women", that was addressed by Lenin (and also by Trotsky).

When Lenin wrote in 1917 - between the two revolutions of that year, and before he had returned to Russia - that "it is impossible even to build democracy, let alone socialism" without the women, he also prefigured the National Democratic Revolution altogether, with the clear implication that

democratic class struggle is a prerequisite of socialism.

In the last line of the text for this session, Lenin repeats the “No Woman, No Revolution” message:

The proletariat cannot achieve complete freedom, unless it achieves complete freedom for women.

Lenin, To the Working Women, February 1920

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Lenin on Women, 1919 - 1920](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).